



## **Cheasty Mountain Bike / Pedestrian Trail Pilot Project Project Advisory Team (PAT)**

**Meeting #2: October 23, 2014**

### **--Meeting Summary--**

#### **PAT Members Present**

Connie Bown  
Westin Brinkley  
Melanie Courver  
Kathy Colombo  
David Couture  
Darrell Howe  
Curtis LaPierre  
Dan Moore  
Phillip Thompson  
Sarah Welch

#### **Pat Members Absent**

Ed Ewing  
Tom Linde

#### **Project Team Staff and Consultants**

Doug Critchfield, Project Manager, Seattle Parks and Recreation  
Jon Jainga, Seattle Parks and Recreation  
Paula Hoff, Seattle Parks and Recreation  
Jacobo Jimenez, Seattle Parks and Recreation  
Margaret Norton-Arnold, PAT Facilitator  
Casey Rogers, PAT Administrator

#### **MEETING OVERVIEW**

**Margaret Norton-Arnold** welcomed everyone to the second meeting of the Cheasty PAT, noting that the primary purpose of the meeting was to brainstorm a draft set of design principles and criteria for the new Cheasty multi-purpose trail. The meeting is an opportunity for the Project Advisory Team to substantially shape and influence trail design.

**Dan Moore** was not at the first meeting, so he took a few minutes to introduce himself. Dan lives in the Beacon Hill neighborhood, and spends a lot of time running and bicycling in the Cheasty area. He studied ecology and environmental studies, and has worked for 20 years as a naturalist. During the past 8 years he has been involved in the adventure travel world, working on projects that pair adventure and tourism with ecology. Dan brings his experience from around the world to the PAT: *It's interesting to compare where adventure travel is having a positive impact, and I think the Cheasty project could have a positive impact as well.*

**Connie Bown** had also not been at the first meeting, and introduced herself. Connie is a retired small business owner and the original owner of a home on 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue South. She has a strong personal interest in the area, and has worked over the years to keep Cheasty Boulevard free from the negative impacts of development. She has been very interested in the potential negative impacts of a mountain bike trail: *I am concerned about the impacts of parking on the Boulevard, and I will be interested to see how the trail project is going to impact me personally, as well as the collective community.*

**Doug Critchfield** noted that a significant portion of the meeting agenda was devoted to a discussion of the environmental issues related to Cheasty. He reiterated the upcoming schedule. The schematic (60%) trail design will be presented to the PAT in November. After this discussion, the landscape architect will continue to refine the design, which will be discussed again at the December 10 meeting of the PAT. The architect will then make changes leading to a 95% design, which will be presented to the public in January 2015. An environmental review of the proposed design will also be conducted, and this will establish what can, and cannot, actually be constructed at Cheasty. Doug noted that the criteria developed by the PAT, in combination with Best Management Practices used in the profession, will serve as the guiding parameters for the trail design.

**Margaret** discussed a few items of PAT business. Not all of the “need to know” documents identified at the October 2 meeting have been completed and compiled, but that work is underway. The request has been made for committee binders; to respond to this, a dedicated website for committee use will be established and will include all relevant materials for reference and downloading. Some PAT members had wondered about the email comments forwarded by Margaret; she is forwarding all emails she has received to the group. A new email address, [CheastyPat@Seattle.gov](mailto:CheastyPat@Seattle.gov), will now serve as the repository for email comments. PAT members are encouraged to read these comments, using ideas from them and responding through their work as a group as they see fit to do so.

In response to a question, Margaret noted that she had offered to forward the letter from Tom Linde on his behalf, and that she would do so for any PAT member that requests this. PAT members do not have alternates to fill in when they are absent, so if members want to contribute to the PAT discussion but cannot be in attendance at the meeting, she will forward their comments to the group.

## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

**Paula Hoff** is a strategic advisor in the Superintendent’s office. She has been reaching out to the Rainier Vista Community, in response to the concern that a representative from Rainier Vista was not serving on the PAT. She noted that Parks would be going out into this community to determine needs and interests for the trail, and that the groups she had been in touch with were excited and approving of this approach. The meeting will likely be in the second week of November, and will include a diverse group of community members who are served by Seattle Housing and the Horn of Africa Services. Those organizations will be reaching out to their partner service providers in the area. The purpose of the meeting will be to get input and ideas from youth and families of underrepresented populations. The meeting will likely be organized around small-group discussion tables, and it would be ideal to have PAT members facilitating those discussions. Paula also asked that PAT members, and those in the audience,

refrain from lobbying these groups to reflect one perspective or another. She hopes that the information obtained through the meetings will be as unbiased as possible.

Paula has also been in touch with the Department of Neighborhoods to acquire a larger list of potential groups to reach out to regarding the Cheasty project.

**Melanie Coerver** suggested that the public comment at the PAT meetings be held earlier in the meeting so that people do not have to wait for a full three hours until they make their comments to the group. Margaret responded that this really depends on the meeting agenda, as it can be beneficial for observers to hear the content first, before they comment. But it is certainly possible to be flexible with this, so we can wait and see how future meetings can best be organized.

### **TRAIL CONSTRUCTION**

**Jacobo Jimenez** is a senior trail manager for the Parks Department. He described the process that Parks uses to evaluate, and eventually construct, new trails. Jacobo's powerpoint has been posted to the Cheasty project website. Members asked questions and provided comments:

**Q:** Do you complete thorough geotechnical and habitat reviews prior to construction?

**A:** Yes, this is part of the environmental analysis that must be completed before we build.

**Q:** How does the design change when you have steep slopes?

**A:** Typically, we will clear more on the uphill side; I can email you a slide that describes our approach in more detail.

**Q:** Are the designs different for a bike vs. pedestrian trail?

**A:** The principles are essentially the same, but the classification and trail widths will be different.

**Q:** Since we don't currently have multi-use trails that incorporate pedestrians and bicycles, could you comment on the design for a trail that would accommodate both pedestrian and bicycles, given the dimensions you spoke of?

**A:** The design is quite similar; a multi-use trail will be very comfortable for walking, but users will need to be cognizant that there is the potential for a two-wheel vehicle to come down the trail.

**Comment:** Since we are supposed to be discussing pedestrian and mountain bike trails both together and separately, we need to look carefully at safety issues.

**Q:** Will the trails have pervious or impervious surfaces? Will they allow for the percolation of water?

**A:** That depends on the material you use. Crushed rock gravel allows for percolation, but any good trail will be designed to shed water off to the side. Soil type factors in as well; obviously a sandy soil will drain faster than heavy clay.

**Q:** I am curious about a broader citywide perspective on trail construction. Could you tell us about trails that are currently used by bikes and pedestrians in Seattle?

**A:** There are paved multi-use trails, including Burke Gilman, Waterfront, Alki and Greenlake. In Ravenna there is a crushed rock multi-purpose trail.

#### **EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS AT CHEASTY**

**Jon Jainga** provided members with an overview of the existing environmental information related to Cheasty, noting that much more specific information will be generated and evaluated once a trail design has been completed. At this point, a determination will be made regarding the level of State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) review required for the project. This could range from a "Determination of Non-Significance," to a "Mitigated Determination of Non-Significance," to an "Environmental Checklist," to an Environmental Impact Statement. A copy of Jon's powerpoint presentation is on the project website. Members asked questions and made comments:

**Q:** I'm confused about the number of acres in the project site; is it 29 or 40?

**A:** When you include the surrounding areas of the property, it is 40 acres.

**Q:** Do you have an inventory of all of the trees: non-native versus native?

**A:** No, as you saw in the powerpoint we have a general sense of the types of trees, but we have not completed an actual inventory. That may come up as part of the SEPA process.

**Q:** You're not including the uphill portion of Cheasty, you're stopping at Cheasty Boulevard, is that correct?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** Who determines if the environmental review is a DNS, EIS, or something in-between?

**A:** One of our senior planners at the Parks Department will discuss this with the City of Seattle's Department of Planning and Development. They consult together to make that determination. After the evaluation has been completed, the Department of Planning and Development reviews it to make sure the evaluation has been completed accurately and in accordance with all regulations.

**Q:** Is there a possibility that the SEPA review could derail this whole project? You do have some sense, correct, that this project will be viable?

**A:** So far we have not found any fatal flaws, and we are moving forward on the assumption that yes, it is likely that the environmental review will indicate this project can be built. Of course there may be areas in the design that will need to be adjusted/refined in order to meet environmental parameters.

**Q:** Have any wetland delineations been completed?

**A:** We know there are two wetlands on the site, and those were identified through the Vegetation Management Plan. We will need to review that again, however; quite a bit of time has gone by since we created that Plan.

**Q:** Do you know the soil make-up of Cheasty?

**A:** No, we have a general idea, but soil specifics will be likely evaluated through the SEPA process.

**Comment:** It's likely that stormwater regulations could push this into a full EIS review. The list of exemptions does include trails for public use in natural areas, but only if they are under a certain size.

**Q:** So, because we don't have all of the environmental information yet – it sounds like we will be going back and forth between the design, data gathering, and our overall process?

**A:** Yes, that is correct. We will continue to gather as much environmental data as possible, and will continue to keep the PAT informed about that progress, timing, and relation to the trail design.

### **BRAINSTORMING ON DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

The Project Advisory Team engaged in a brainstorming session on possible design principles and criteria for the pilot project trail. A draft of these ideas was provided back to the PAT on Wednesday, October 29. The group will continue refining this list on-line, with the final due for completion on Tuesday, November 4. This refined list will be provided to the trail designer, Maggi Johnson. Maggi, in turn, will present the preliminary trail design to the PAT at their November 20 meeting.

### **IDEAS FOR PILOT PROJECT MONITORING**

In addition to the design ideas being shared, Margaret suggested that the group keep a running tally of ideas for the longer-term monitoring of the pilot project. This subject is scheduled for the December 11 meeting, but as ideas are generated, they will be noted. Two were suggested during this meeting:

- Monitoring should include ongoing conversations with user groups to understand who is using the trail, why they are using it, and what their trail experience is.
- A financial mechanism, such as a bond, should be in place to finance restoration if the pilot project fails. There needs to be money set aside to prepare for this contingency.

### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Cheasty Trails Pilot Project Advisory Team will be held on Thursday, November 20, 6:00 p.m. at Rainier Community Center.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

- I'm shocked and unhappy at the lack of mountain bike expertise on this panel. I like the use of the words "joy" and "fun" and the idea of getting kids onto that trail. I am excited to think about the opportunity to have the City's first mountain bike park be located in our neighborhood. *(Peter Verbrugge)*
- I'm one of the forest stewards for Cheasty, and I want to thank the members on the PAT. There's some real fleshing out that's going on and I'm really happy with that. People are starting to actually ask questions about what the plan is. What I want to stress is that this is the plan of multiple communities. *(Jim Denison)*
- I want to talk about the additional community outreach activities that are scheduled and put into the program to make up for the lack of representation on the PAT. I had hoped that it would go beyond one meeting; there are opportunities here for much more public involvement. I like David's idea earlier about asking kids their opinion; that should be included in the outreach. *(Roger Pence)*
- I am also one of the Cheasty forest stewards. I'm usually a pedestrian and I live in Colombia City on the other side of Beacon Hill. I want to see commuter trails on the hill, so I can walk my child to Kimball Elementary, and on up to the businesses on Beacon Hill. I hope that idea becomes part of the conversation. *(Susan Zeman)*
- Two concerns: people and science. On the PAT I served on, we conducted extensive public outreach before we had a plan. This seems to be the opposite approach. The public involvement needs to be better. We also need to have a wetlands plan and the SEPA information. *(John Barber)*
- Ironically I was about to say the exact thing. Community factors are one of the listings in the City Council's directive to this group, and these diversity focus groups must include the Asian-American communities. Rainier Vista needs representation, but that shouldn't be considered the only representation we get from other interested groups. I also agree with John in that we need the science first before the design is completed. *(Cameron Justam)*
- We (Cheasty Greenspace at Mountain View) have already been engaging local youth in the design, and when the trail is ready to build, they will be helping to build it. In terms of net positive impact, we're planting 1000 trees this year, and when we're doing any trail project we replant natives. I also want to address safety. If you limit the biking to just an outside trail, it will create a culture of negative activities in the middle of the greenspace. *(Joel DeJong)*
- I live in Rainier Vista, and I want to make sure the pilot project looks at, and understands, what bike trails can do. We can do a literature review for that. The City already owns 99 acres of green space throughout Seattle. *(Jay Gairson)*

- I want to echo the comments about creating a “net positive” here. For example, a new trail just might mitigate surface water problems. Once you actually get more eyeballs on this space, things might be better after the trail than before. *(Tom Vial)*
- I am the president of the Rainier Homeowners Association and my daughter has been coming to Cheasty meetings since she could barely walk. The reason we have been devoting our evenings and weekends to this is so that one day we can walk the trails through Cheasty and share the green space like I enjoyed as a kid. And maybe even enjoy an exciting new activity – mountain biking. This space that has been a barrier that can now be converted to community use. *(Celeste Gilman)*
- I got involved in this project through Joel and have been a volunteer pulling ivy and getting rid of some of the invasive species. The original lure for me, and for many others, was the mountain bike project. Recreation and environmental stewardship are part of the conversation. You need to get people vested in an area to care about it; if you don’t have any connection to the land then you won’t care about it. It’s already had a net positive impact. If you reduce this plan into just making a perimeter trail, you’ll lose the opportunity to have future stewards and future conservationists. *(Nancy Kim)*
- I grew up in the Rainier Valley in the 70s, and we were always looking for opportunities to ride our bikes. I have had the opportunity to take my 6-year-old riding, and it would be great to come across the bridge and get out and do some mountain biking in the city. Let’s take this opportunity, think it through, and come up with an idea that’s good for all. *(Mark Grantor)*
- I want to encourage you to think big with this and don’t minimize the plan over misplaced ideas. I have seen that area transformed. Before it was all about turning this into an environmental area, leaving it for raccoons and sparrows. When I worked over there I could barely do it, it’s such back-breaking work, and there were masses of people volunteering. Keep the joy, and don’t diminish the vision out of misplaced worries. *(Kathryn Rathke)*
- I’m back again with the Cheasty Vegetation Management Plan. If you look at the area in green that is “quality habitat” which is 75 – 100% native plant inventory. This is from 2003. If you look at the red along the area, that work has already been done by Earth Corps. In the Comprehensive Plan Update from 2012, it reads: “Open Space Goal NRG 13, Cheasty Boulevard has been reclaimed and redeveloped and consistent with the 1909 Olmsted Plan.” *(Mark Holland)*
- I want to bring this back to where this PAT came from, which is a City law that was passed by the City Council and the requirements for releasing the funds for this trail. It reads: “the Parks Department is to complete a full public and technical process for a perimeter trail,” not trails. That’s the directive from City Council. What we should be talking about here is how that can be accommodated and not what this particular group can accommodate in the future. This team needs to be talking about what can be accomplished within the law, and what the City Council

will give you funds for. I have to say that the structure and facilitation of this PAT have allowed this to veer off course. The Parks Department needs to bring this back on course, and to do what you need to provide data to the PAT. (*Mira Latoszek*)

- I would like to ask the question of the PAT members, would you like to have more input to your own agenda? I understand that there are necessary efficiencies. To Doug, I would like to ask a question – will you commit to make this a Citywide conversation? He said yes. I haven't seen that, I hardly think my neighbors know about this. I would ask the people here who aren't on this PAT, do you feel that there is anything being done? What is being done to help the situation in this community, to bring the community back together? Frankly, I don't understand how anyone who has done community work could think that this is being done. I would like to compliment the overall operation for tonight. One last thing, how many of you have had the amount of baseline education you need. If you haven't read the bicycle charter, and the other documents, you don't have an understanding. (*Skip Knox*)
- Chris Williams stated at multiple parks board meetings that this would only be a single-use perimeter trail. What is Seattle's definition of the natural area and green space? (*Pat Morton*)
- You may not know that there are some restricted parking zones in Rainier Vista by the light rail stations. Schmitz Park is having a big problem with off-leash dogs, and it's doing some damage. Once you get to Jefferson Park, you can't continue walking. I'm really surprised that this trail isn't going to be ADA and I am curious enough to do the legal research on that. There is an idea out there that designing trails isn't about designing for speed but that it's about slowing things down. (*Patricia Naumann*)
- Tom Linde came to my door and asked for me to voice my opinion, if I had any. I want to support the idea for my kids to recreate. I don't know how many other neighbors have supported this, but not everybody in the area is opposed to it. (*Greg Pomrehn*)

#### **WRITTEN COMMENTS SUBMITTED AT THE MEETING**

Cheasty Boulevard Greenspace should be a wildlife sanctuary with no trails through it at all, including a perimeter path. The Olmsted plan is for people to enjoy the Cheasty forest from the Boulevard, not with trails through the forest. The "ring of green" Olmsted designed was about preserving a circular wildlife corridor in the forest undisturbed by humans who could still enjoy the forest from an adjacent boulevard for humans. Cheasty is a landmarked boulevard and a rare existing remnant of the Olmsted "ring of green" design for Seattle.

We should celebrate and enhance the Cheasty Boulevard and forest the Olmsted way. Not by turning the Cheasty forest into a bicycle amusement park.

Use the Cheasty Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) to inform the PAT. The VMP is the governing document. Why is it NOT part of the PAT conversation? The technical data shared so far is shallow and barely informative.





Please share the Cheasty VMP with the PAT!!! No separated trails. The City Council said one multipurpose trail, not parallel bike/hike trails. No loss of any “quality habitat” of 75-100 Native plant understory as defined in the Cheasty VMP. (*Mark Holland*)

1) Diversity focus groups must include Asian-American groups, since they comprise a significant part of the area’s population. Rainier Vista needs representation, but not the only representation!

2) “habitat protection is a consideration” – habitat protection is the goal of forest restoration and should therefore be the goal of any trail construction/maintenance.

3) When is this going to be discussed as a topic? – community factors; environmental justice; many age/abilities. Public land needs to be for all. (*Anonymous*)